

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, the specification and claims 1, 5-6, 9-15, 18, and 20-22 have been amended. Claims 1-22 are pending and under consideration.

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the following discussion and in view of the present amendment, is respectfully requested.

I. Claim Objections

In the Office Action, claims 5 and 12-16 were objected to. Various claims have been amended in response to this objection. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112

In the Office Action, claims 1-22 were rejected under the second paragraph of 35 USC § 112 as being indefinite. Various claims have been amended in response to this rejection. Accordingly, withdrawal of the § 112 rejection is respectfully requested.

III. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

In the Office Action, claims 1, 8, 12-13, and 15-22 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by "Saladin" (U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2002/0126799).

Claim 1 has been amended to recite:

a plurality of aperture leaves each having a circumferential shape;

a driver section; and

a flexible linear member, one end thereof being secured to at least one aperture leaf and the other end being connected to the driver section, the driver section being configured to drive the flexible linear member in an axial direction thereof to cause movement of the aperture leaf, wherein

the aperture leaves are arranged in a thickness direction thereof adjacent to each other, the one end of the flexible linear member is secured to an inner or outer circumferential surface of the at least one aperture leaf, and the driver section drives the flexible linear member while increasing or decreasing a contact portion between the flexible linear member and the inner or outer circumferential surface of the aperture leaf by warping the flexible linear member.

It is respectfully submitted that Saladin fails to teach each of these features of claim 1. In contrast to claim 1, Saladin merely discloses employing four shutters 4, 6, 8 and 10 and, thus, can only provide a rectangular irradiation area.

Since Saladin does not discuss or suggest all of the features of claim 1, claim 1, and claims 2-22 depending therefrom, patentably distinguish over Saladin (and any combination of Saladin with the additionally cited prior art). Accordingly, withdrawal of the prior art claim rejections is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

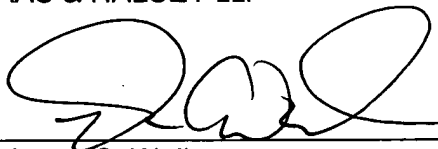
Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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